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ABSTRACT

During the last three decades, remarkable transformations have occurred in the American family, including changes in economic well-being, gender roles, family relationships, and family structure. Based on a 15-year study begun in 1980, this book examines young Americans coming of age in the 1980s and 1990s among families experiencing these social changes, providing insight into how both familial and historical contexts affect young people as they make the transition into adulthood. The book considers parents' socioeconomic resources, their gender roles and relations, and the quality and stability of their marriages. It then examines children's relations with their parents, their intimate and broader social affiliations, and the psychological well-being. Among the study findings noted are that in this era of shifting gender roles, children who grow up in traditional father-breadwinner, mother-homemaker families and those in more egalitarian, role-sharing families apparently turn out the same. Also found was a beneficial influence of parental education on children, and the troubling long-term impact of marital conflict and divorce. The book includes policy recommendations based on the findings. Extensive tables of findings are appended. (Contains 381 references.) (HTH)

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